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SUICIDE SQUAD
THE DRAGON'S HOARD
OSTRANDER
YALE
ISHERWOOD
CAMPANELLA

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URGGHK!
DAMN! BODY'S STILL SCREWED UP FROM RIDING A TRANSMISSION BEAM INSTEAD OF POPPING THROUGH THE PHONE WIRE. PALMER WARNED ME ABOUT THAT!
NOW WHAT DO I DO?

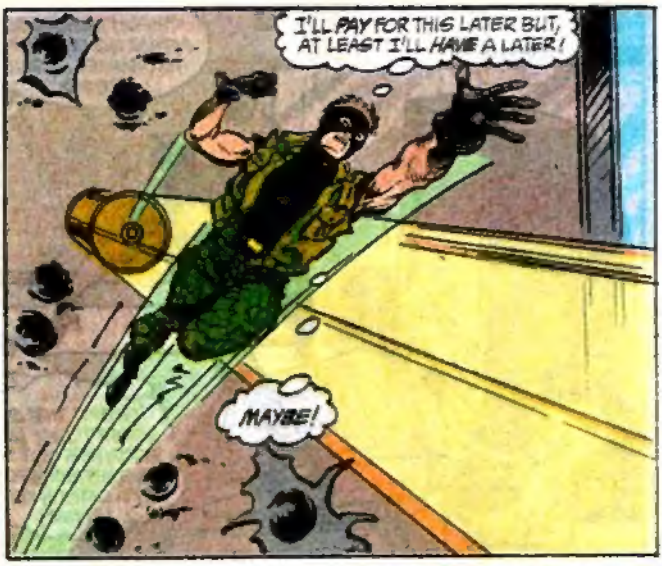
<HIM! THAT IS THE ONE, CATSEYE! HE IS THE GAIJIN WITH THE MYSTERIOUS POWERS WHO ATTACKED US IN THE GARAGE!>
<OH--FORMIDABLE! YOU ARE CERTAIN HE DIDN'T ALSO BRING HIS MOTHER?>

AWRIGHT, GENTS! LISSEN AND LISSEN TIGHT! YOU SEEN ME, SEEN WHAT I CAN DO. I'M NOT A MAN TO MAKE IDLE THREATS...
...HE SAID, MAKING AN IDLE THREAT...
...BUT IF YOU DON'T GO BACK DOWN THAT HALL PRONTO, THERE'S GOING TO BE SOME TROUBLE!

<THAT IS THE WORST JOHN WAYNE IMPRESSION I HAVE EVER HEARD. TELL ME--THE POLICE ARE TAKEN CARE OF?>
<YES, CATSEYE!>
<THEN WASTE NO MORE TIME. JUST SHOOT THIS FOOL.>

2

YAAAHH!
PHUT!
PHUT!
PHUT!
PHUT!
PHUT!
YES! THANK HEAVEN FOR ADRENALIN!


I'LL PAY FOR THIS LATER BUT, AT LEAST I'LL HAVE A LATER!
MAYBE!

KRAK!
WHY, TABBY-- WHAT HAVE YOU GOT UNDER YOUR NAILS? YOU BEEN WALKING IN POISON AGAIN?

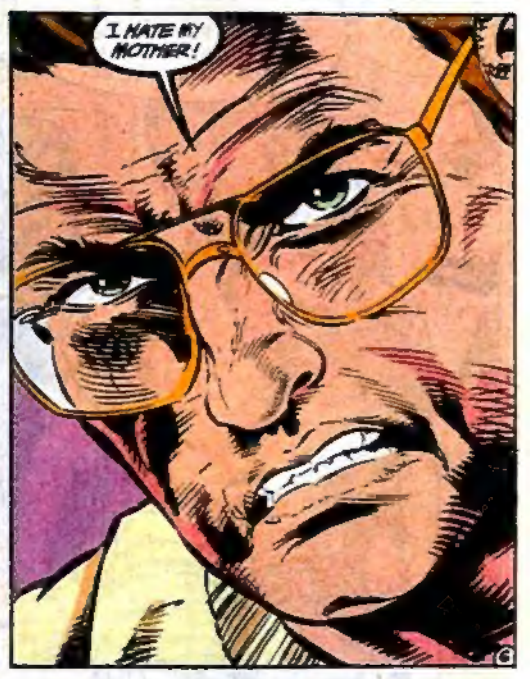
<THERE! HE DOES NOT APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR! HE CHANGES SIZES! SEE?!>
GREAT! THIS GUY DOESN'T JUST LOOK WEIRD; HE'S GOT THE EYESIGHT AND REFLEXES OF A CAT! I'M KITTY LITTER!
ELSEWHERE, AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE SHIN JUKU...
I HAVE TOLD YOU...
TOLD US, YES. THAT YOU ARE A SIMPLE HONEST WHORE. THAT KILLING TIDEWATER WAS AN ACCIDENT, THAT HE TOLD YOU NOTHING ABOUT ANY GUNS OR WHERE TO FIND THEM.
YOU WILL PROBABLY GO TO YOUR GRAVE SAYING ALL THAT.
OI! EXCUSE ME? CAPTAIN ZUKO, ISN'T IT? MIND A SUGGESTION? IT MAY HELP.
WHAT?
IT'S LIKE THIS, CAPTAIN--MY MATE HERE HAS SOME PSIONIC ABILITY. HE CAN GET YOUR GIRLFRIEND THERE TO COME ACROSS WITH THE GOODS.
I DOUBT IT.

WHAT'S TO LOSE? GIVE IT A SHOT! IF I'M LYING, YOU KILL US BOTH. IF NOT, YOU SET US CLEAR--EVENTUALLY. ALL RIGHT, MATE?
IS--AS YOU SAY--WORTH A SHOT.
ONE LAST THING. MIG POWER HAS TO BE RELEASED BY OUR CONTACT. I NEED ONE OF THOSE TRANSCEIVERS FOR A SECOND. CUT ME LOOSE?
NO. IS A TRICK.
NO! NO TRICK! YOU CAN LISTEN TO EVERY WORD! NO CODE WORDS, I SWEAR! EVERYTHING WILL BE IN PLAIN ENGLISH!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU KNEW PLAIN ENGLISH.
VERY WELL WE GIVE IT A SHOT.
<VASSILI, CUT HIM LOOSE AND GIVE HIM HIS MINIATURE RADIO. IF IT IS A TRICK, WE ARE IN NO WORSE SHAPE THAN WE WERE BEFORE AND HE WILL BE AS DEAD.>
YO, ORACLE!
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?!

MIGHT ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION. NOW, SHUT YOUR GOB AND LISTEN, YOU BLOODY COW!
WE'RE IN THE DEEP END. OPEN CARMICHAEL'S BRAINWAVES FOR FIVE MINUTES AND THEN SHUT HIM DOWN. BOOMERANG OUT!

SEE? NOTHING SIMPLER, EH? UH, YOU MIGHT WANT TO PLACE THE LAD NEXT TO THE CHROMO AND THEN STEP BACK.
HE GENERATES A FIELD ABOUT FIVE FEET ACROSS AND YOU DON'T WANT YOUR BOYS CAUGHT IN IT, RIGHT?
<MOVE THE BOY IN HIS CHAIR NEXT TO THE WOMAN AND THEN STAND AWAY.>
<YOU WILL REALLY RELEASE THEM IF THIS WORKS?>
<OF COURSE NOT. DO YOU THINK I AM THAT BIG A FOOL?>

SNIFF! SNIFF!
HUH! THAT SMELL! YOU REMIND ME OF MY MOTHER.


I HATE MY MOTHER!

LOOK, LET'S YOU AND ME BE FRIENDS, OKAY?
WE'RE GREAT FRIENDS, YOU AND ME. I'M THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD YOU CAN TRUST, WHO CARES ABOUT YOU. I'M GENUINELY INTERESTED IN YOU.
TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF, OKAY?
I--MY NAME IS NATALIA ANDREYEVNA SPIRIN. I AM A...WHORE TRAINED FOR ESPIONAGE; A LASTOCHKI, OR "SWALLOW" IN ENGLISH. MY CODENAME IS LAMIA; MY FIRST MARK, A GREEK ATTACHE THAT I COMPROMISED, CALLED ME THIS NAME.
I CAN MANIPULATE MY PHEROMONES, MAKE PEOPLE--MEN ESPECIALLY--DO WHAT I WANT. I BELONG TO THE RED SHADOWS. ZASTROW, MY MASTER, WILL HELP MY SISTER NATALIA IN HER MEDICAL STUDIES, BUT ONLY SO LONG AS I LIVE THIS LIFE--!
THAT'S WHY YOU KILLED THAT GUY TIDEWATER, RIGHT? BUT HE TOLD YOU WHERE THE GUNS WERE, DIDN'T HE? THE GUNS HE WAS TRYING TO SELL? WHERE ARE THEY, NATALIA?
THERE IS A RUINED TEMPLE 20 MILES DUE SOUTH OF KOHNLEH, 122 MILES DUE EAST OF BAN ME THUOT IN VIETNAM. AN OLD VIET CONG AMMUNITION DUMP IS HIDDEN IN A TEMPLE.
TIDEWATER CONCEALED THE GUNS THERE.
WASN'T THAT NICE? AREN'T YOU GLAD I'M ON YOUR SIDE? I BET THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO SET ME FREE.
<ARE YOU TALKING TO ME, FOOL? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?>
YOU BLOODY DILLBRAIN! HE DOESN'T BLOODY WELL SPEAK ENGLISH, DOES HE?! IT DON'T WORK WITH HIM!
WHAT IS THIS? YOU SAID HIS FIELD ONLY WORK FIVE FEET...!
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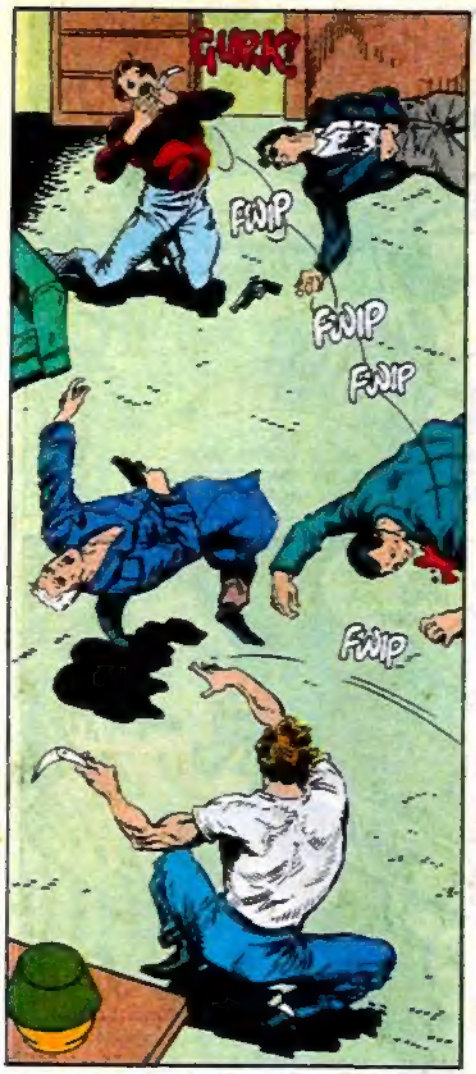
HELLOOOOO, CAPTAIN! YOU SPEAK ENGLISH, DON'T YOU?
YOU KNOW, I DO BELIEVE YOUR MEN ARE PREPARING TO KILL YOU AND TAKE THE GUNS FOR THEM-SELVES. MAYBE YOU SHOULD KILL THEM FIRST.
(BETRAY ME?)
(NEVER!)
BLAM!
BDOW BDOW!
HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA HA!
BLAM!
BLAM!
(AWAY...! MUST GET...!)
ARRGH!
BDAM!
HA HA HA HA!


FURIE
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

HEY, DIGGER. REMEMBER WHAT I SAID I'D DO IF I EVER HAD YOU IN MY FIELD?
GUESS WHAT? IT'S TIME.

YAHHGHHH!

YER DEAD WRONG, MATE. TIME'S UP. YOU ONLY HAD FIVE MINUTES, REMEMBER?
I'M GONNER PUT IN A LI'L CALL, PASS ON THE INFO, AND THEN I THINK IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE SCHOOLIN'. JUST ME AND YOU.

GOOD WORK, HARKNESS. I'LL PASS IT ON TO THE CAMBODIA TEAM.
WHAT'S CARMICHAEL SCREAMING ABOUT IN THE BACKGROUND?... WELL, ALL RIGHT. I'LL LET YOU HANDLE IT, THEN.

YES. YES, I HAVE IT, ORACLE. WE GUESSED CORRECTLY ON THE DROP AREA--IT HAD TO BE NEAR THE CAMBODIA/VIETNAM BORDER. WE'RE LESS THAN THIRTY KILOMETERS AWAY, BY MY RECKONING.
WE SEEM TO HAVE LOST THE KHMER ROUGE FOR THE MOMENT. WE'LL PROCEED WITH THE REST OF THE MISSION
ALERT BLACKHAWK EXPRESS FOR EARLY PICK-UP, IF POSSIBLE. VERTIGO OUT.
YOU CAN FLY AND GORT CAN LEAP THE DISTANCE. ONE OF YOU, TWO GETS TO CARRY ME.
I AM NOT A MULE, LAWTON! MORE TO THE POINT, I DOUBT IF I COULD MANAGE YOUR WEIGHT
THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO TRAVEL AIR GORT
<WERE YOU ABLE TO DECIPHER THE TRANSMISSION?>
<NO, COMRADE COMMANDER. THE BEAM WAS TOO NARROW SHALL WE INTERCEPT THEM?>
<NO, ALTHOUGH HAVE COMBAT HELICOPTERS FOLLOW FROM A DISCREET DISTANCE AND HAVE OUR GROUND TROOPS REACT TO SUCH
<OUR MAN WITH ZIUKO SEEMS TO HAVE FAILED US BUT THESE MEN SEEM TO KNOW WHERE THEY'RE GOING. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM TO THE DRAGON'S HOARD.>

VOMP!

<I DON'T CARE WHAT THE PARTY SAYS -- THERE IS A HELL AND I'VE SEEN IT! I NEVER WANT TO TRAVEL THAT ROAD AGAIN!>
<FINE, MEIN HERR. YOU MAY STAY BEHIND WHEN WE GO. IN THE MEANTIME, LET US FIND THE WEAPONS.>

<COMRADE STALNOVOLK! WE ARE AMAZED TO FIND YOU HERE! WE ARE THE NEW MEMBERS OF RED SHADOWS, COME TO DISPOSE OF SOME SOVIET WEAPONS--!>
<AS AM I. YOU WILL OBLIGE ME BY DISPOSING OF THIS FLEA ON MY BACK.>

<THIS FLEA SPEAKS RUSSIAN. ONE FALSE MOVE, COMRADE, AND A BEAM OF LIGHT WILL GO IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER.>
<WE'RE HERE TO DESTROY THE GUNS. ANY PROBLEMS WITH THAT?>

<THAT IS ALSO OUR PURPOSE. WHY DON'T YOU STAND ASIDE AND LET US DO IT AND ALL WILL BE SATISFIED?>
<NO. MY WAY TO MOSCOW LIES IN MY COMPLETING THIS MISSION AND IF I MUST GO THROUGH YOU TO DO IT, SO BE IT. YOU WILL STAND ASIDE, LITTLE COMRADES.>

WE, TOO, HAVE A CAPTIVE--BUT ONE WHO DOES MY WILL. NIGHTSHADE, DISPOSE OF THESE OBSTACLES IN MY WAY.

I'M SORRY, DARLING, BUT THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE IN CONTROL OF THIS BODY RIGHT NOW AND I AM NOT INCLINED TO DO ANYTHING THAT YOU SAY!
ENCHANTRESS!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!

SCHWUP
SCHWUP
SCHWUP
BRADA
BRADA
BRADA
BRADA

MEANWHILE, BACK IN TOKYO, THE OFFICES OF THE FUJIWARA CORPORATION...

<THEY HAVE OVERRUN OUR HEADQUARTERS, OKAMI I NEED WEAPONS, MONEY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS...>

<OF COURSE, HONORED OYABUN! BUT WILL THEY NOT FOLLOW YOU HERE?>

<IMPOSSIBLE! THEY COULD NOT KNOW--!>

THE *IMPOSSIBLE* JUST BECAME *POSSIBLE*, RYU.

OF COURSE, WHO ELSE BUT THE MAN KNOWN AS *MANHUNTER* COULD FIND ME? MY COMPLIMENTS, MARK-SAN!

TELL ME--ARE THERE NO BONDS STILL BETWEEN US? I HELPED YOU FREE YOUR FAMILY; I HELPED YOU DEFEAT DUMAS, YOUR ENEMY...

FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES, RYU. AND AFTER DUMAS' DEATH YOU DECLARED THAT ALL OBLIGATIONS BETWEEN THE DAICHI-DOKU AND I WERE ENDED.

I ACT ON BEHALF OF A DIFFERENT GIRI-NINJO NOW.

YOU ORDERED THE DEATH OF MY COUSIN. YOU OWE MY FAMILY A DEATH.

WHUMP!
ALL'S SQUARE BETWEEN US?
YES. YOU SEE TO MRS. WALLER. WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE--IN HONOR'S NAME--I CAN DO ALONE.
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE HOSPITAL...
KRAK!
UNGH!
NOW, PERFIDIOUS MITE!
AWAY!
THANKS! BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
OH YEAH. I'M THE NEW ATOM. WALLER'S HAD ME AS A SORT OF SECRET MEMBER OF THE TEAM SINCE JERUSALEM.
LOOK, CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS LATER?
DEFINITELY.

CAMBODIA...
<GRADENKO, TAKE GORT. I WILL DISPOSE OF NIGHTSHADE. YEROSHA, TAKE THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING AMERICAN. THEN WE WILL TURN THE ARMS OVER TO OUR KHMER ROUGE COMRADES AND BE GONE FROM THIS HELL!>
GRUHHAR!
WEEEIIINN!
WHAM!
<UHH! IMPRESSIVE, OLD WOMAN. WERE-BEAR VERSUS STEEL WOLF.>
<THIS WOLF IS STRONGER.>

BY WHATEVER NAME, BY WHATEVER SOUL, I WILL HAVE YOU, WOMAN!
I'VE BEEN HAD, DARLING--BUT BY FAR BETTER BEINGS THAN YOU.
I AM MISTRESS OF THE SUPERNATURAL AND NOT DAUNTED BY CREATURES SUCH AS YOURSELF
SCHRHAK!
I AM NO MERE VAMPYR--FOR I HAVE THE METAGENE--AND POWERS UNLIKE ANY YOU HAVE KNOWN BEFORE
YOU HAVE NEVER KNOWN A "CREATURE" SUCH AS I!
HUH CUTE YOU BOTH REAL? YOU BOTH THE GAME?
GUESS I'D BETTER SHOOT EVERYBODY--JUST TO BE SAFE
POW!
POW!
I'D BETTER GO FIND THE GUNS THIS IS GETTING BORING
16

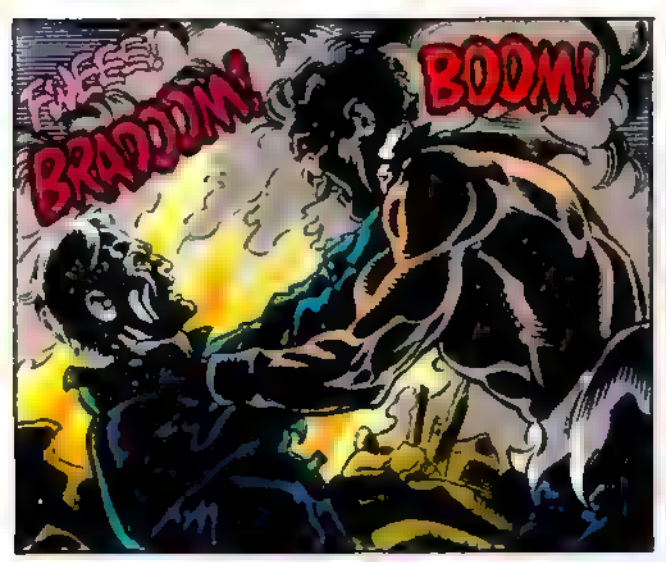
I PROVED MYSELF YOUR MASTER BEFORE--
--AND I SHALL DO SO AGAIN.
REAL MASTERS DON'T BRAG THEY DO.
WHUK!
CHUD!
RAHHHRRR!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KITTYCAT? DON'T LIKE THE TASTE OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE?

HEY, EVERYBODY. LOOK WHAT I FOUND.

KRAKOOOOOM!

SHWOMP!

FUMP!


EWEE!
BRADDDDM!
BOOM!

THIS IS APPALLING! A WHOLE SECTION OF A COUNTRY'S HER.TAGE IS BEING WANTONLY DESTROYED!
YEAH, WEL.., THAT'S WAR FOR YOU

I DISPOSED OF THE HELICOPTERS BUT I SAW WHOLE TROOPS OF KHMER ROUGE MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION--INCLUDING ARMOR!
GUESS WE SHOULD MAKE TRACKS. LETS SEE -- WHAT'S THE QUICKEST WAY OUT OF HERE?

WE DON'T NEED YOU WE NEED YOUR OTHER PERSONALITY
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, LADY? SAY IT SAY IT.
KRAK!

EN--ENCHANTRESS...!

FLAM!
NIGHTSHADE HERE'S THE STORY. WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE UNLESS YOU CAN GET US ONE OF YOUR TUNNELS BACK TO THE HOTEL. CAN DO?
CAN... TRY. NEED TO CONCENTRATE --NOT LET MER--TAKE OVER AS WE GO!
V-O-M-P!
OKAY LET'S GO.
WAIT! WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE GORT!
WHY NOT?
HE'S BEEN OUR COMRADE!
(YO, GORT! MISSION'S OVER! YOU CAN GO HOME NOW!)
OKAY, WE GAVE HIM A SHOT. LET'S BEAT IT
BRADDOM!
BRATTATTATTATTAT!
20

< I ADMIT I BETRAYED MY EMPLOYER AND CAUSED HIS DEATH FOR MY OWN PERSONAL GAIN. I HAVE DISHONORED MYSELF AND MY FAMILY. WILL YOU PERMIT ME TO ATONE?>
<YES. SEPPUKU.>
<YOU WILL BE MY SECOND.>
<I WILL.>
<FORGIVE ME, FUJIWARA-SAN. YOUR DISLOYAL SERVANT SEEKS TO MAKE AMENDS.>
THE NEXT MORNING...
WE HAVE MANY, MANY QUESTIONS STILL FOR YOU, MR. CRAY.
SO HAVE WE.
BE GLAD...TO ANSWER...ANY AND ALL...ONCE MY INSIDES...UNTWIST!
EXCUSE ME? YOU ARE WAITING FOR THE WOMAN IN SURGERY?
I'M SORRY. THERE WAS NOTHING WE COULD DO... THE INJURIES... SO EXTENSIVE...

NEXT: *WAR OF THE GODS*

SUICIDE NOTES

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Dear Suiciders,

"The Dragon's Hoard" has a promising beginning, with lots of double-crossing, intrigue, and espionage. Events moved quickly along in "Dead Earnest," sometimes even faster than I could keep up with them! I loved it! Ziuko betrays his fellow officer, then in turn is betrayed by Tidewater and handed over to the Khmer Rouge. The scene with Amanda and Fujiwara is a good example of how complex international relations can get, and how thrilling a plot can get when the Suicide Squad is involved. I'm thoroughly enmeshed.

It was great to see Tatsu again! (Come to think of it, I've missed the other Outsiders, too! Isn't there supposed to be a new book with this team coming out sometime?) Though she declined Fujiwara's offer, Katana will no doubt become involved in the storyline at some point, perhaps even to avenge Fujiwara's death, and I can't wait to see her in action! Geof Isherwood drew her as an attractive woman, and I think she looks great with longer hair. Robert Campanella's inks polished off the pencils nicely.

Catseye was not only exotic and scary-looking, but formidable, while at the same time it was great to see Eve Eden take him out so easily. I loved the lines she used while she did it! Another very memorable scene was the one with Stalnoivolk, Deadshot and Amanda (of course! Her scenes are rarely forgettable). What made this page so impressive is that we readers never even need to actually see Deadshot in the panels, but he undeniably makes a statement. Amanda certainly knows how to get hired help when she needs it. Speaking of which, it's great to see Mark Shaw again. I like the way he was adamant about not rejoining the Squad on a mission, then suddenly found himself knee-deep in one. He seemed to come back to life once he got his feet wet, so he'll be fun to follow in the upcoming chapters.

I can't wait to meet the Red Shadows next issue!

Sincerely,
Neil Ahlquist
Minneapolis, MN

Now, THAT'S the kinda letter I like to read!

* * * * *

Dear Squad Leaders,

It has been a long time since I wrote to these or any comic book letters pages, but I decided it was time for me to break my silence. I have been with this book from the beginning. I have read every story the "new" Squad has been involved in and I would just like to say: I love it. Keep all the action, intrigue, and suspense in the stories of late and your book will survive a long time. But please, no more pie-throwing. Bring back Nemesis as a permanent member of the Squad. I am glad to see Mark Shaw is getting involved again. You're the best!

Matthew Evelsizer
(no address given)

Now, THAT'S the kinda letter I like to read!

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

What an exciting team you're forming. It's good seeing Mark Shaw again; he's been inactive for far too long now. Stalnoivolk will be useful as the wild card in the pack—it'll be interesting to watch Deadshot trying to keep this one under control. I'm also glad to see Eve Eden back on the Squad, and from reading the lettercolumn, it seems that Nemesis will be taking an active role again, also.

Of course, it's always slightly worrying when the Squad gets up to full strength like this, because then it's time for someone to die. At the moment, no one's really expendable... and I've got this horrible feeling that Amanda's card may soon be coming up ("surprise ending to beat all surprise endings"?).

With John soon to take over writing CAPTAIN ATOM, do you think it's possible that Cameron (or Nathaniel, or whatever he's calling himself these days) could cross over with the Squad? Perhaps in a search for Firestorm? Oh, and while I'm on the crossover trail, it would be interesting to see Hank Hall working with the Squad on some case. After all, the Squad did rescue (?) him from...ah, forget I said anything.

I hope Murph takes Amanda up on her offer; he's wasted at Belle Reve.

Nice art—wonderful cover. Whenever it's possible, Karl Kesel is the man for SQUAD covers. Inside, though, Robert Campanella seems to work well with Geof. I hope this team can stick together longer than the average Squad team (of artists or characters).

Rock and roll,

Rol Hirst
West Yorkshire
England

So? Were you surprised? When that doctor came in all sad-looking, and he said the patient was dead? Didn't you all just freak out? Did we get all of you thinking that Amanda was dead? Did we? Well, did we get most *of you? Some? Any?*

Please write in and let me know. It was a cheap trick (you reading this, Ostrander?), but hey, it's a buck, right? We're cheap! And proud of it!

* * * * *

Dear SSer's

I love the way the new SUICIDE SQUAD is going, and I especially loved #53. "The Dragon's Hoard" is shaping up nicely. There are so many different groups involved in this story, it's hard to tell who're the good guys, which I like. Stalnoivolk will make a great member, so make sure you keep him in the Squad. Let's hope he'll find the Squad more interesting than the Red Shadows, especially since the Shadows don't want him. Gort and Boomerang's relationship will be real interesting. And make sure you keep Katana as a member, too. If you think about it, she'd be perfect. Over the years, the Squad's biggest influences have been Batman, Firestorm, and the Outsiders. Batman is only an occasional guest star, and Firestorm is too far gone to join any group, so Katana would be great, especially if Major Victory is brought back. I have a hunch Vertigo will buy it in this story. Vertigo was a good member, but I won't miss him. What would be cool is if Stalnoivolk helped out Vertigo in his suicide attempt. I'm also looking forward to Cateye and Ben going at it, which will be one serious fight. And I'd bet my SS #1 that Boomerang and Billy Tidewater know each other. As far as new members go, I'd like to see Major Victory, Creeper, Thorn, Captain Comet, Clayface IV, and Thunderbolt join the Squad. They're all screwed up in one way or another.

Keep up the good work, guys.

Steve Johnson

P.S. If you ever do another story like #52, I'll never read the SUICIDE SQUAD again.

* * * * *

Dar Squad Scribes,

Well, you've finally done it: Stalnoivolk is in the Squad! Now, let's hope he stays with them for a while. After all, he has practically been abandoned by Zastrow and the Soviet government—where else does he have to go? Keeping him in the group would be great. Keeping him under control is another problem altogether.

I loved the Wall's explanation of how she got the clearance to spring Gort; I wonder what Sarge Steel would say about it? Other highlights in the story for me were the plot itself (the Squad in Japan—excellent), the prospect of seeing Katana in action in these pages, and Nightshade taking it to Cateye (I can't wait to see the Tiger take him out!). It looks like John and Kim really have some momentum with this story; it's going to be a good one!

Fantastic, enticing, dramatic. These are just a few words to describe the cover of SUICIDE SQUAD #53. You probably sold a few extra copies with that one. The interiors by Isherwood and Campanella were excellent. I likes the idea of Mr. Campanella as a regular inker for Geof—the splash page looked really good. This is a good art team in the making, and I hope the powers that be keep them together for a while.

Issue #53 was a great success, a book I awaited impatiently and one that did not disappoint me in the least. Incidentally, I really like the "Dragon's Hoard" logo. Who designed it? Until my next letter, take care, and thanks for all the hard work!

Sincerely,
Scott R. Pyle
IUP
428 Esch Hall
Indiana, PA 15705

Scott, the "Dragon's Hoard" logo on the cover was designed by Lettering Lord Todd Klein based on some kibitzing from art director Curtis King and me. The interior logo was done by Geof for the splash page of #53, and I liked it so much, I took a photostat of it and used it in #54-57.

On behalf of our hard-working team, I thank you for your generous comments, Scott.

* * * * *

Mr. Raspler:

No! No! The real Atom is *not* dead. I refuse to believe it. Don't start killing off those old heroes. First Barry, now you keep trying to tell me Ray is dead. Never will I believe such a line of crud. There would have been a twelve-issue miniseries with crossovers and deep implications if he were dead, not a one-panel shot of a hotel room explosion.

Well, anyway, *any* Atom is a good Atom. I like this new guy whether he's the original or not. I think you should do more with him, and I will follow Oracle's search into his past.

When Cray leaned forward and said to Barbara on page 12 last panel smacked me in the face. I almost believed he was talking to me for a minute. I realize this was the desired effect for most readers, but I never expect to be caught off guard anymore. I've seen everything.

I was thinking of ways through this guy's story until he said Deadshot killed his father. This is interesting. Hmmmmm.

Let's see more of this Atom and let's see some of the real Atom's former tricks. My favorite was when he drilled through the Khund's shoulder like a bullet during INVASION! That was the best.

Chuck Dill
10420 Armstrong Street
Fairfax, VA 22030

P.S. With what Cray said in #44 and did in #47, I'm being conned. He held off Kobra, for God's sake.

He drilled through some alien's shoulder like a bullet? Eeeuuu! Frankly, I don't remember that charming bit of business, and I can't say I'm sorry about that.

Anyway, Chuck, you'll be psyched to hear that we'll be concentrating on the mystery surrounding our diminutive Mr. Cray starting in SUICIDE SQUAD #59. And for that special storyline, we'll be bringing in some very big ringers. When Ray Palmer was declared dead in #44, if you recall, he had a few DC Universe notables in attendance at his funeral. And now three of 'em (old teammates of his, in fact), have heard about this new guy with these strange shrinking *powers, and—*

Oops. Better watch my enthusiasm. If I spilled the beans on this one, John and Kim would string me up. SUICIDE SQUAD #59 is where THAT particular tale begins, so you'll just have to wait two months for details!

* * * * *

Dudes,

I can't honestly say I like the direction the Squad is going in. In the first several issues, we were introduced to a team of murderers, liars, and thieves, one of whom got killed every third issue or so. Now, no one is dying and the team kind of reminds me of *Mission: Impossible* or *The A-Team*.

Several of my friends feel the same way I do, so do us a favor: dump all this espionage crap and go back to the senseless violence that made this comic what it is today.

Later,
Dr. Dis

P.S. Whatever happened to Slipknot?

You know, Doc, recently we've grown quite fond of the sensible *violence as depicted of late in SUICIDE SQUAD. But if your comments spark a sizable letter-writing campaign in favor of the "go in, screw up, lose a team member, get out" stories, then I'll gladly bow to the will of the majority.*

Well, folks? How stands the readership? Senseless violence or espionage crap?

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Dear Squadders,

As a longtime *Mission: Impossible* fan, I can safely say that I like storylines such as "The Dragon's Hoard" started in #53. It brings the Squad more into the real world, which I have always assumed was one of the reasons for the changes begun in #40.

The Wall made some valid points about racism. They're valid because her character has experienced them at the hands of people like Fujiwara.

And I like the team Amanda is assembling for this mission. Except for Katana, none of them is a hero in the traditional sense, but they all have their own peculiar codes of honor. I hope that Deadshot will be a part of this team as he, too, has a code of honor (of sorts).

I'm especially glad to see Manhunter again. Though he lost his own title, he does not deserve to be cast into limbo. I hope he'll be a regular part of this title.

The artwork, as always, was great. I can't draw myself, so I doubly admire artists and their talent.

I hope some of the characters, such as Captain Boomerang, Poison Ivy, and Count Vertigo, who became more than villains through their appearances in this series, are not forgotten.

Jerry Wilson
Lincoln, NE

The Next Issue Box That Held a Terrible Secret Knowledge

SUICIDE SQUAD #58 is our star-studded, super-spectacular, simply stunning, butt-kicking no-holds-barred crossover to end all crossovers issue! "War of the Gods" by George Pérez and Cindy Martin will have shown you chaos erupting across the earth with Wonder Woman caught in the middle. And when chaos erupts, where can people turn but to your favorite group of semi-legitimate psychopaths for hire, The Suicide Squad! #58 is only a part of the greater "War of the Gods" whole (you've all heard this song before, right?), but for breakneck action, weird characters, the surprising appearance and subsequent satisfying deaths of a few familiar but tired faces (and a sad scene between Ben and Mari), you won't want to miss this! Actually, we get the most violent fight scene stuff of the crossover, so please join us here next month for SUICIDE SQUAD #58: "Suicide Attack!"

—Dan Raspler
Broken on the Wheel